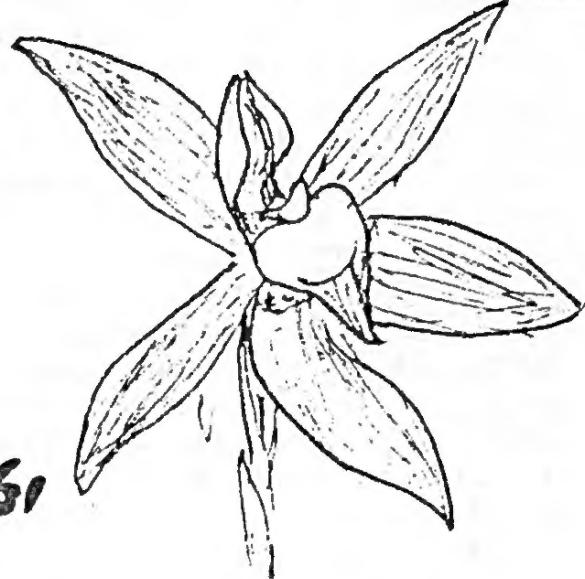


CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST



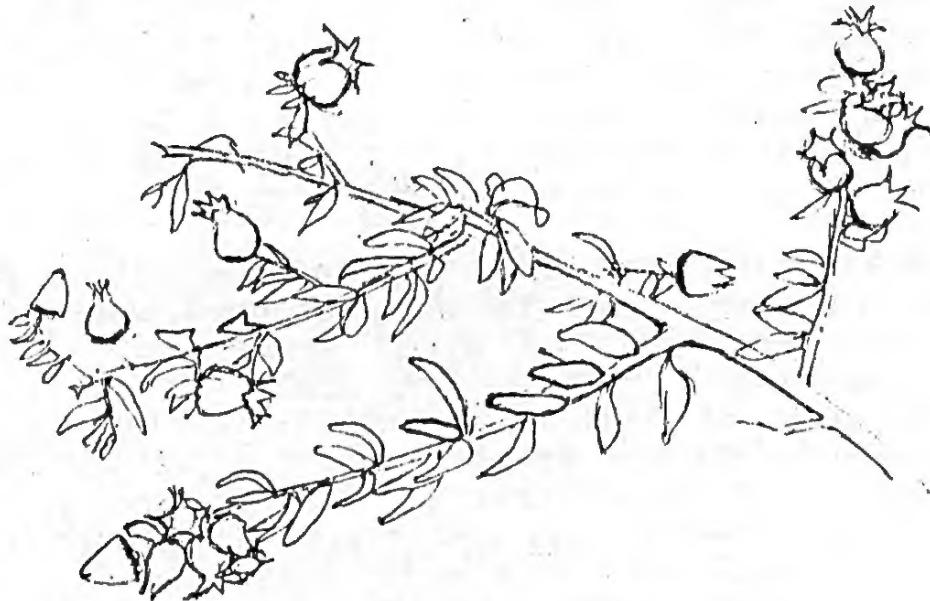
OCTOBER 1990 # 161

BITTER CRYPTANDRA AT CHEWTON

The illustration is of bitter cryptandra (or *Cryptandra amara*), found in flower at Chewton (south of the railway line), and drawn, by Mary Thompson.

As the sketch shows, it has small leaves and small, bell-shaped flowers. The flowers are white.

Bitter Cryptandra is an uncommon plant in this district. It is found in Kalimna, at the edge of Smith's Reef Forest, and along the Maldon - Lockwood road..



STOP PRESS. A Pair of Noisy Friarbirds (See Sept. Notes) were seen at North Castlemaine on Oct 1. They had been heard but not identified for 2 or 3 days. (RN)

From Whyalla we took our time, calling in at the little towns on the way down the coast. Some of them were most attractive. The country changed as we drove south from Bluebush and Mulga to Mallee to wheatlands and farmland as the rainfall rose from 100 mm per year to about 600. We arrived in Port Lincoln about 4 o'clock, and had time to go for a walk after we'd settled into a very comfortable cabin van in the Kirton Point Caravan Park which overlooks Boston Bay and Boston Island. There is a walking track which cuts around the edge of the park, so we followed the westerly section, and I was delighted with the numbers of flowers and birds, though the density of the mallees and shrubs made them a bit hard to spot. I found Hardenbergia, Sticky Wattle and a number of plants I couldn't identify in flower, as well as Mosquito Orchids and a greenhood, with maroon stripes on the back of the rather large upright hood, and a blunt maroon tongue. I identified it as *P. obtusa*, but my old Black says that it is only found in the Mount Lofty Ranges in S.A.

One afternoon we went out to the Flinders National Park. We stopped at the Flinders Wells cairn, which commemorates Matthew Flinders finding water near this spot in 1802, on the way there, and I watched an Osprey hovering over the bay. It plunged suddenly, feet first, and came up with a nice fish. Many of the tracks in the Park need 4WD but we were able to go out to the Memorial on a good gravel road. The Memorial, not obvious by the only map we had, was high on a hill overlooking Boston Bay, and there was a 45 minute return walk to it. Having come so far we decided to make the climb, and it was well worth it. There were quite a few flowers on the way, and magnificent views from the top. Sadly the vandals had been at work even here and had prised off the new bronze plaque and a marble slab, and smashed it to pieces. I added Blue Fairies to my small orchid list and Port Lincoln Parrots to my bird list, and on the way back I added the Brown Currawong, a race of the Grey Currawong, to the list.

We also spent a day in Coffin Bay and the Coffin Bay National Park. I would have liked to have stopped more often on the drive as there were lots of birds about, but there were few places where we could pull off the road. At one lookout place I watched a pair of Inland Thornbills trying to bustle off a very determined Golden Bronze Cuckoo. We watched a number of Emus feeding as they strutted through the low vegetation out towards Point Avoid, and saw plenty of unidentifiable birds diving into the bushes! The main vegetation in the park is mallee in the sandhills area and coastal heath out towards the limestone cliffs. Again, most of the tracks are for 4WD and most of the walking tracks are long distances.

It was here I saw the Red Parrot Bush, *Templetonia retusa*, again for the first time.

The drive to Coffin Bay from Port Lincoln is well worthwhile in itself, passing through bushland, with natural stands of sugar gums, swamplands, stands of grass trees, and heathland. The lookout in the Conservation Park just before Coffin Bay

has some beautiful views across the many inlets and islands, and to the north is Mt Duffin and the Marble Range.

On the way back we stopped at a picnic spot on Big Swamp under some big old Red Gums. There were dozens of grebes on the water, but all too far out to identify.

The next day we went down to Sleaforth Mere - after the first real rain of the trip - and nearly got blown away as we wandered among the low shrubs. We saw our only terns here - Fairy Terns. We could have gone down to Whalers Way if we'd bought tickets in the town, but I got a bit stubborn about and wouldn't pay to see some coastline, even if we might be able to see whales!

We could have done such things as hire a boat to go over to Boston Island which our cabin overlooked, and we could have explored over there and visited the cottage where the first settlement was, or we could have gone out to Dangerous Reef and the underwater observatory or we could have visited one of the other islands or Conservation Parks, or the west coast and its interesting historic spots and scenery.

We did visit Mill Cottage in Flinders Park in the town, a National Trust building, with all sorts of interesting historical relics, and visited by members of the Royal Family, with signatures to prove it!

We walked one evening along the other part of the walking track and saw a pair of Pied Oyster Catchers, and later a pair of Pacific Gulls pulling something from the water amongst the rocks. It kept sliding back, but they finally jammed it safely, and I was able to see through the binoculars that they had a squid about 45 cm long.

After six days at Port Lincoln we headed north again, but first taking the road towards Coffin Bay and turning up the centre of the Peninsula towards Cummins. The country was very attractive and reminded me of the country between Kingston-on-Sea and Narracoort. We saw plenty of birds flying past as we drove, but not a one where we stopped for morning tea!, but there was a lot of Flame Heath and an attractive bush with little purple flowers. There was lots of red bottlebrush along the roadsides, too. At Cummins, a wheat town, we turned towards Tumby Bay, and what a beautiful drive through the hills that proved to be. Further up the road we stopped for lunch, and I added Purple-gaped Honeyeater to my list. There was another group of honeyeaters tumbling and rising quite high above the scrub, but, hard as I tried, I could not identify them.

After an overnight stay at Port Pirie we headed for Adelaide (and the antique markets) via Port Broughton and the Copper Triangle. We stayed as usual at the Adelaide Caravan Park, only 45 minutes walk, along the river, through the park and the Botanical Gardens, to the city. We enjoyed the company of Dusky Moorhens, Noisy Miners, Purple Swamphens, Black Duck, Maned Geese, Crested Pigeons, Musk Lorrikeets, Rainbow Lorri-

keets, Welcome Swallows, and quite a few others. On the last day we watched a water rat coming up almost to our feet, and then slipping into the water if we moved, to watch us from the safety of the reeds until he got up courage to approach again.

We stayed in Adelaide a week before setting off home via Kingston - didn't get a chance to stop on the Coorong as it was raining - Bridgeport, which is well worth a visit by any birdo, and is one of the most beautiful bays I know of (we hope to go back "one day") Mt Gambier, Nelson and stayed the second night at Portland, getting home next day.

There are many places along the route we took which would be the most marvellous holiday places for Birdos, the Murray from Mildura to Morgan, especially Overland Corner, in particular. There's good caravan park accomodation all along there.

This time I listed 113 species, 7 less than our last holiday, but I spent less time in the bush on foot this time. Early though it was in the season the flowers were a delight too, especially on the Eyre Peninsular.

FLAX-LEAF BROOM PULL

Twelve members of the Club took part in the Flax-leaf broom pull, in a most successful working bee. One member pulled out over 1000 broom plants. Seedlings were pulled from the previously weeded section, and the area cleared was increased.

Orchids seen in the area were pink fingers, leopard orchid, and dwarf greenhood.

A flowering specimen of leafy templetonia was also found. This is a rare plant, and has been seen in few other areas in the district.

The ridge of the gardens has quite a good sample of the local wildflowers. However, Cape Broom is spreading very rapidly through the park. Hundreds of small plants, up to 10 cm or so can be found in otherwise weed-free areas. In the past, it is evident that many of the trees have been removed, and have not re-generated. The absence of trees perhaps explains why there are so many shrubs and daisies in the reserve, as well as explaining why weed infestation is now occurring so rapidly.

TIPS FOR EXCURSIONS

Do you lead or take part in excursions? If so, the following tips may prove useful.

THE LEADER should

*Inform the drivers of other vehicles of the route to be taken. Some indication of the length of the excursion (km and hours), and type of roads to be travelled is also desirable.

*It is not practical, and probably not very safe, to

travel in a convoy along a main highway. It is best to indicate the meeting place e.g. at the Newstead P.O., or some other readily identifiable place.

*It is a good idea to appoint a "tail-end Charlie".

Preferably the vehicle will be easily identifiable, such as a camper van.

*At major turnings (particularly on to a minor road), wait until the tail vehicle arrives.

*If the convoy is likely to be large, provide ribbons or the like, so that members of the excursion can identify vehicles in the convoy.

*At stopping places, let all of those on the excursion know what the attractions at this spot are (e.g. to see a particular plant or animal, or perhaps just to look around for a while), and how long the stop will be for.

*When leading off, let the others know where the next stop will be.

*Announce when the excursion has ended. Members can then decide to make their own way home, or continue back with to convoy.

MEMBERS OF THE EXCURSION should

*If possible share transport.

*Make sure that you have supplies, sufficient petrol etc. BEFORE the excursion starts.

*Other drivers expect you to continue on the excursion, so do not leave the convoy unless those affected have been told (for example, the leader, the tail car, and those just to the front and back).

*YOU TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CAR BEHIND YOU. When taking corners, or at intersections, or at any other confusing place, wait until the car behind has caught up and can follow you.

*Never travel at an uncomfortable or unsafe speed. The car in front will wait for you at any turn-off.

*If the worst happens, and you get lost, just wait. Someone will come looking for you.

*Don't get behind the tail-end car. Often the leader does not count cars, but waits only for the tail car to appear.

ALL MEMBERS.

One of the advantages of group excursions is that there are many pairs of eyes (and ears and so on). Share with others what you see and find. And remember that things that might be common place to you may be of great interest to others. And ask questions.

W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMPOUT

EP

GRAMPIANS CAMPOUT OCT 26-28

Accommodation is at Camp Acacia, Dunkeld Rd, Halls Gap.
Supply your own sheets, pillow cases, blankets etc.

Meals supplied. Casual meals also available if ordered.

Friday night is supper only. Weekend concludes with Sunday lunch.

Friday from 6.00 p.m. Welcome and information. Talk and slides showing many aspects of the natural history of the Grampians.

Saturday 9.00. Assemble at Acacia. Choice of Wildflowers: Trip to Diversion area & Jimmies Creek Rd Wildflowers: Trip to Ironbarks Forest & Fyans flowers Birdwatching: to birdwatching area with Thelma Argall Birdwatching: to birdwatching area with Jim Pickford Walking: To top of Mt Rosea led by Mike Ireson (could be all day and take picnic lunch)

Saturday 12.30. Lunch at Acacia

Saturday 1.30. Choice of activities

Saturday 6.00 Dinner at Acacia

Saturday 7.00. W.V.F.N.C.A. meeting

Saturday 8.30 approx. Don Tumney, Ranger in charge Grampians national Park speaking about "Managing a National Park", and John Miller, C & E officer on study leave, speaking about Grampians flora.

Sunday 8.00. Assemble at Acacia. Choice of Free time "Flat Rock" Aboriginal paintings and wildflowers

Sunday 1.30 Lunch at Plantation picnic ground

Further enquiries from Bob Humphries, 053 58 3205 (30 Patrick St, Stawell 3380). Application/Booking sheet from B. Maund or E. Perkins.

Kerrie's Latest Protégée

Early on September 18 Kerrie the dog was insisting that I should "come and see" what was in her shed, which has a large Yellow Gum growing in the corner. I did as I was told, and "went to see" and there on the trunk, with his head in a dint in the fibre glass roof was a half grown Sugar Glider. I fetched him down and put him in a box with a hottie and an old jumper, as per instructions from Berrie, for the day (except for a brief disturbance when Doug came home at lunchtime). After showing him to granddaughter and family he was duly released just after sunset (too sleepy earlier, he said). After he woke up properly he made his way up to some small branches where he proceeded to slit the bark and appeared to be licking at the sap, looking down at me occasionally as I watched. Except for his first fright he seemed quite unperturbed through the whole experience, and, I'm thankful to say, made no attempt to bite. Rita Millis

NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

BLACK RINGTAIL? A report was made of an animal about the size of a rat, with long nose, white tail, and white blaze. It walked on the back legs. It was like a 2/3 size ringtail, with underfur and underbelly black. It was killed by a vehicle near Goldfields Nursery, Muckleford.

WHITE-FRONTED HONEYEATER AT DARGILE. On Wednesday 5 September, at Dargile forest, a bird about the size of a white-eared honeyeater was identified as a white-fronted honeyeater. It first drew attention to itself by its extraordinary noise. Its head had a reptilian appearance, and its appearance and behaviour fitted the description in Pizzey's bird book. (KT)

NOISY FRIARBIRDS AT DARGILE. Also on the trip to Dargile, noisy birds were thought, from their sound, to be Noisy Friarbirds, for which there have been a number of reports for that part of Victoria in recent months. (MO).

[Whirrakee Sept 1990 (Bendigo F.N.C) reports the sighting of a flock of 100+ at Dargile on 2/8/90, with the comment "Noisy Friarbirds occasionally turn up in small numbers in the Bendigo area. A sighting of such a large flock as seen at Dargile would be unusual.]

TOUCHING FAMILY SCENE IN LITTLE DESERT. Red-capped robin and a Horsefield bronze cuckoo were seen cuddled together, on a fence, in the Little Desert. (KT)

FAIRY MARTINS were found nesting in a culvert, between Dargile forest and Heathcote-Colbinabbin road. (EP)

LAPWING AND YOUNG. Young lapwings were hatched in mid-august, only a few centimeters from the edge of the verandah at Guildford. (BP)

SHEEP'S BURR. Hairy sheep's burr has been found growing in the western part of the botanic gardens.

BIRD LIST ADDITIONS are eastern spinebill, white-browed scrub-wren and grey currawong, all for Fryers Ridge on 27/9/90.

WESTERN GERYGONES have returned for the season to the west side of Mt Tarrengower. (KT)

LITTLE AND LONG-BILLED CORRELLAS have again been seen at Bells Swamp, in close proximity. This is one of many observations of these two species made at the swamp.

TOWN BIRDS include Rufous Whistler and Purple Crowned Lorikeets at Campbell St. and Black Faced Cuckoo Shrike at Doveton St.

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. PROGRAM

Fri 12 Oct. TREKKING IN THE HIMALAYAS. Jim Nichols and Lob Sang D Lama. High School at 8.00 p.m.

Sat 13 Oct. BLACK HILL, KYNETON. Leave SEC at 1.30 p.m.

Oct 26-28 GRAMPIANS. WVFNCA campout at Churches of Christ Centre, Halls Gap. See separate notice.

Sat 3 Nov. KALIMNA WALKING TRACK. Meet at Kalimna Point gateway, Kalimna Tourist road at 9.30 am. This is part of the Castlemaine State Festival program.

Sat 3 Nov. MUCKLEFORD and SMITH'S REEF TOUR. Meet at parking area between Railway station and Cricket centre 1.30 pm. A Cast. State Festival event. Leaders E. Perkins & R. Mills.

Wed 7 Nov. KAWEKA WALK. 6.30 pm with Kaweka Committee.

Fri 9 Nov. GRASSES Speaker is E. Perkins. 8 p.m. at High School. [note changed program]

Sat 10 Nov. MUCKLEFORD and SMITH'S REEF TOUR. Meet at parking area between Railway station and Cricket centre 1.30 pm. A Cast. State Festival event. Leaders E. Perkins & I. Higgins.

Sun 11 Nov. KAWEKA WALK. 3.30 pm with Kaweka Committee.

Meetings on the second Friday of each month at Castlemaine High School at 8.00 p.m. Business meetings on the fourth Thursday at 38 Campbell St at 7.30 p.m. All members invited. Visitors are invited to attend the Club's sessions.

SUPPER ROSTER

Oct: P Shaw, E Hall Nov: R Mills, E Duffin

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc
P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine 3450

Committee: Ern Perkins (Pres), Chris Norwood (V. Pres), Maggie Oliver (V. Pres), Barbara Maund (Sec), Clodagh Norwood (Treas), Kaye Turner, George Broadway, Rita Mills (Newsletter), Ian Higgins, Robyn Holden.

Subscriptions

Student/Pensioner	\$5	Single	\$8
Family	\$12	Supporting	\$15
Newsletter posted:	Subscription	plus	\$5.
